

Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church
Cambria City Neighborhood
711 Chestnut Street
Johnstown
Cambria County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5761

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church

HABS No. PA-5761

Location: 711 Chestnut Street, Cambria City, Johnstown, Cambria County, Pa.

Description: This church measures 38' x 71'. Three-bay principal gable facade with central three-story tower. Five-bay side elevations. The church has brick walls with stone facing on the main front. The entrance, set in the base of the tower, has a Tudor arch surrounded by stone panels. Flanking the tower are pointed-windows with y-tracery. The corners of the tower and the main front have stepped buttresses. Inside, the church is lit by two-light windows in the side facades. Plaster walls and open-timber roof. A stone on the left side of the entrance is inscribed "Holy Cross Lutheran Church Slov. Ev. Luth, cirk. sv. kriza. 1932."

History: On May 10, 1914, the Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was formed. In November of that year, the congregation purchased this site for the sum of \$4,300. On this property was a house which was remodeled and extended into a church and school at a cost of \$1,200.

In September 1921, the congregation decided that it was in need of a new church building and a building fund was begun. It was not until 1932 that an architect was hired. On June 26, 1932, final services were held in the old church and the following day demolition of the old church began. Construction began straight away, with brick for the walls and stone for the front facade brought in from the hills surrounding Johnstown by members of the congregation. They did most of the work themselves under the supervision of the contractor. The cornerstone was laid and dedicated on July 24, 1932. By November 1932, the entire venture was completed. The cost of the church was \$23,000. In 1959, the church was remodeled.

The church is a member of the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, formerly known as The Slovak Synod, or Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church. The parishioners were predominantly Slovak until the early 1930s. The predominance of any one nationality has diminished. In a study by Kory of the "Churches of Johnstown" in 1972 he noted that at that period none of the parishioners resided in the neighborhood of Cambria City. About 80% of the church population lived in other parts of the city, while the other 20% lived outside the city limits.

Sources:

"Golden Jubilee, 1914-1964," anniversary pamphlet, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Johnstown, Pa.

Kory, William, B. "The Churches of Johnstown Pennsylvania, Population Survey," (University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, 1972), 110.

Tax assessment card, assessment no. 86-04-315, Cambria County Courthouse, Ebensburg, Pa.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP). An overview of history of the city (HABS No. PA-5669) and an overview of the neighborhoods of Cambria City and Minersville (HABS No. PA-5672) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the downtown and other neighborhoods.

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CHURCH
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This report was prepared by Bernadette Goslin in August 1988 under the direction of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, the supervisory historian of the project. Goslin's and other project historians' work was published as The Character of a Steel Mill City: Four Historic Neighborhoods of Johnstown, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1989), edited by Kim E. Wallace. Illustrations in the publication include large format photographs taken by HAER photographer Jet Lowe and 35 mm photographs taken by the project historians.